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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 000091

SIPDIS

STATE ALSO FOR EAP/BCLTV; USPACOM FOR FPA  
BEIJING PASS TO CHENGDU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/19/2014

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM BM NLD

SUBJECT: GOB RELEASES 26 NLD MEMBERS

REF: 03 RANGOON 1572

Classified By: COM Carmen Martinez for reason 1.5(b).

¶1. (C) Summary: On January 16, the GOB released 26 NLD members detained in connection with the ill-fated May 30 NLD convoy, including seven Members-elect of Parliament. With the exception of ASSK and three senior party officials, all previously detained participants in the convoy have now been released. However, dozens of other NLD members rounded up in a post-attack sweep remain in detention. NLD leaders are uncertain about regime motives with these releases, but speculate that this action may be the product of a low-key dialogue between ASSK and the ruling SPDC. End summary.

¶2. (U) According to the GOB, and verified by NLD sources, on January 16 Burmese authorities released 26 members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) who had been imprisoned since the May 30, 2003 attack on Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) and her convoy in Depeyin, north-central Burma.

¶3. (SBU) Among those released on January 15 were seventeen NLD members who were participants in the May 2003 convoy. The remaining nine of the released activists were rounded up in the aftermath of the Depeyin attack, including seven NLD Members-elect of Parliament.

¶4. (U) On January 16, the GOB released a short statement announcing the releases, but did not identify the NLD members.

Begin text of GOB statement:

NLD Members Return Home. A total of 26 NLD members who were under detention are being released today. They are all in good health and are back home together with their respective families. The government will continue to release those who will cause no harm to the community nor threaten the existing peace, stability and the unity of the nation as the country goes through a steady evolution towards a democracy.

End text of GOB statement.

¶5. (SBU) NLD sources provided the U.S. Embassy with the following information on the NLD members released on January 16:

From Mandalay Prison:

¶1. U Saw Htay  
¶2. U Kan Htun  
¶3. U Ko Gyi  
¶4. U Min Thu  
¶5. U San Lin  
¶6. U Oo Ko  
¶7. U Bo Zan  
¶8. U Kyaw Din

From Kalay Prison:

¶9. U Tin Aung Aung (MP-elect)  
¶10. Dr. Win Aung  
¶11. U Paw Khin (MP-elect)

From Shwe Bo Prison:

¶12. U Saw Hlaing (MP-elect)  
¶13. U Myint Kyi (MP-elect)  
¶14. Kyaw Zin Win (youth leader who joined the ASSK convoy in Rangoon)  
¶15. Ye Myint Aung  
¶16. Aung San  
¶17. U Htun Myaing (MP-elect)  
¶18. U Bar Bar (MP-elect)  
¶19. Tin Htun Oo (MP-elect)  
¶20. Daw Win Mya Mya (reportedly suffered injuries during the May 30 attack)  
¶21. U Hla Myint

From Myintkyina Prison:

¶22. U Mayan Baw Lan  
¶23. U Nay Win  
¶24. U Khewanawtwei  
¶25. U Lansang  
¶26. U Naing Zaw Win

¶6. (C) Comment: With this latest round of releases, all of

the NLD members who participated in the ASSK convoy and were detained o/a May 30 have been released -- with the exception of ASSK and senior NLD officials U Tin Oo, U Aung Shwe, and U Lwin. However, dozens of NLD members rounded up during a nationwide sweep in the months following the May 30 attack remain in detention and the NLD continues to call for their release and the reopening of party offices. NLD leaders in Rangoon are uncertain as to why the GOB has released this group at this time, but speculate that the action may be the result of an ongoing, low-key dialogue between ASSK and SPDC envoys. End comment.

Martinez